

Prabuddha Bharata

उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत



प्राप्य पराश्रिताश्रित ।

Natha Upa. I. iii. 8

Arise! Awake! And stop not till the Goal is reached.

—Swami Vivekananda.

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CONVERSATIONS AND DIALOGUES OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

(RECORDED BY A DISCIPLE.)

PART II.—XVIII.

[Place—*The Math, Belur.* Year—1901.

Subjects—*The first idea of orthodox Hindus regarding the Math—the idea was dispelled by the celebration of the Durgā Puja in the Math.—That a Brahmajña Puruṣa (knower of Brahman) like Swamiji observes the Puja of Gods and Goddesses is a thing to be pondered upon.—Great Souls (Mahapuruṣas) are born to fulfil Religion and not to destroy.—If Swamiji had thought the worship of Gods and Goddesses unworthy of being performed, he would never have countenanced it.—A person like Swamiji, a knower of the Brahman, and endowed with manifold qualities, is unique in this age.—In following the path laid down by him lies the good of the country and the Jivas.]*

At the time the Belur Math was established, many among the orthodox Hindus were wont to make sharp criticism of the ways of life in the Math. The orthodox customs of the Hindus were not strictly observed by Swamiji who had returned from the West, nor the restrictions of food—these formed the principal subjects of criticism; and placing credence in these remarks, many among the general Hindu public, not well-acquainted with the spirit of Hindu scripture, used to make unjust

strictures on the life and doings of the Sannyasins. Passengers in the boats which used to pass by the Math, would make fun of and ridicule the Math in diverse fashions and sometimes would not even shrink from besmirching the white and stainless character of Swamiji by means of vulgar slanders. The disciple, while coming to the Math by boat, has himself heard such criticisms with his own ear. Hearing the report of such criticisms from the disciple, Swamiji would

say, (in the words of the couplet of Tulsidas) "The elephant passes through the market-place, and a thousand curs begin barking after him; so the Sadhus have no ill-feeling when worldly people slander them." Or again he would say, "Without persecution no beneficent and helpful idea can enter into the heart of a society." Consequently Swamiji used to regard the sharp criticisms and strictures of the public in the light of a help in the propagation of new ideas and would never contradict them or allow any of his devotees to contradict. He would exhort everybody, "Go on working without an eye to results. One day you are sure to reap the fruits of it." Again, on the lips of Swamiji were very often heard the words of the Gita, "A doer of good never comes to grief, my son."

To-day I shall record something as to how such sharp criticism and stricture of Hindu orthodox society was silenced before the passing away of Swamiji. In May or June, 1901, the disciple one day came to the Math. Seeing the disciple Swamiji said, "Bring a copy of '*Astavimsatitwa*' (twenty-eight categories) of Raghunandan soon, one day."

Disciple.— Yes, Sir, but what will you do with the Raghunandan *Smriti*—which the present educated India calls a heap of superstition?

Swamiji.— Why? Raghunandan was a great Pandit of his time. Collecting from the ancient *Smritis* he laid down the customs and usages of the Hindus, adapting them to the needs and requirements of the changed time and circumstances. All Bengal is following the rules as laid down by him. But in the iron bounds of his rules regulating the life of a Hindu from conception to death, the Hindu society

was much oppressed. In matters of eating and sleeping, in the ordinary functions and necessities of life he tried to regulate every minutia of life by rules. In the changes of time that did not last long. In all times and countries, the *Karma-kanda* comprising the social customs and regulations changes forms. Only the *Jnanakanda* endures. Even in the Vedic age you find that the *Karma-kanda* gradually changed in form. But the *Jnanakanda* of the Upanishads has remained unchanged up till now—only there have been many interpreters.

Disciple.— What will you do with the *Smriti* of Raghunandan?

Swamiji.— This time I have a desire for celebrating the Durga Puja. If the expenses are forthcoming I shall celebrate the Puja of Mahamaya. Therefore I have a desire for reading the ceremonial forms of the Durga Puja. When you come to the Math next Sunday, you must get a copy of the book.

Disciple.— Yes.

Next Saturday, the disciple bought a copy of the 'Twenty-eight Categories' of Raghunandan, and took it to the Math for Swamiji. Swamiji was much pleased to get the book, and starting to read it from that very day, within four or five days finished it. Meeting the disciple after a week he said, "I have finished the Raghunandan *Smriti* presented by you. If possible, I shall celebrate the Puja of the Divine Mother. Raghunandan says, "On the *navami* day, worship the Devi with sacrifice of self."

The above conversation with Swamiji took place three or four months previously to the Puja time. Afterwards there was no further talk about it, neither did Swamiji speak about it to anybody. Moreover, observing the movements of Swamiji

at that time, the disciple thought that he did not give any further thought to it. Ten or twelve days previously there was no talk or discussion of the fact that an image would be brought, and the Divine Mother worshipped, neither did the disciple see any arrangements for the purpose. A brother-disciple of Swamiji one day dreamt that the ten-armed Mother Durga was coming over the Ganges from the Dakshinesvar to the Math side. Next morning when Swamiji expressed his desire before all to worship the Divine Mother, he also related his dream. Swamiji, pleased to hear it, said, "Anyhow we have to celebrate the Puja of the Divine Mother this year." Then the Puja was decided upon; and that very day Swamiji, Swami Premananda and Brahmachari Krishnalal went to Bagh-bazar with the object of getting the permission of the Holy Mother, of the devotees of Sri Ramakrishna, for making the 'Sankalpa' (resolve) of the Puja in her name; as the Sannyasins have no right to make any "Sankalpa" for Puja any or other ceremonial function.

The Holy Mother agreeing, the Puja was resolved on in her name, and Swamiji was very pleased at this and ordering an image returned to the Math. Swami Brahmananda took charge of collecting the materials for the Puja and Brahmachari Krishnalal was to be the Pujak. The Math was full of joy. A canopy was erected on the northern side of the grounds of the Math where the present birthday celebrations of Sri Ramakrishna are held, and a few days previously to the Puja, the image was brought in a boat to the Math. * *

Through the exertions of Swami Brahmanandaji the Math was filled with the materials and requisites for the Puja;

and finding everything collected without any omission, Swamiji praised Swami Brahmananda. The garden-house to the south of the Math was hired for a month and the Holy Mother took up her residence there. The Puja of the day previous to the Puja was performed under the *Bilva* tree near the present *samadhi* of Swamiji. The song which he had sung one day before—"Placing the seat of invocation under the *Bilva* tree, for the sake of Ganesha, Gauri will grace the occasion," was fulfilled to the letter.

Taking the permission of the Holy Mother, Brahmachari Krishnalal took the seat of the Puja on the *Saptami* day. An adept among the Kaulas, and versed in the Tantras and Mantras, Sri Iswarachandra Bhattacharjee took the part of the *Tantra-dharaka* (holder and reciter of the sacred book). On the express unwillingness of the Holy Mother, there was no animal sacrifice.

Feeding of the poor and the destitute with the considerations of embodied divinity was made a principal feature of the Puja. Besides, many Brahman Pandits from Behur, Bally, and Utterpara were invited and they all gladly joined in the occasion. It was then that their previous ill-feeling against the Math vanished and the conviction grew in them that the Sannyasins of the Math were real Hindu Sannyasins.

Thus for three days, the Math resounded with joyous festivities of the occasion. The sweet music of the *Nahabat* was echoed back from the other side of the Ganges. Needless to say that the Puja was performed with perfect form for three days, according to Shastric injunctions. * *

Swamiji felt indisposed on the night previous to the *Ashtami* Puja, therefore he could not join the Puja of the day follow-

ing; but rising at the time of the Sandhi Puja, he made three offerings of flowers at the feet of Mahamaya and returned to his room. He felt well on the *Navami* day and sang one or two of the songs which Sri Ramakrishna used to sing. On that night there was great joy in the Math.

On the *Navami* day, at the termination of the Puja, the *Homa* was finished by the Holy Mother wearing the mark of the *Yajna* and finishing the Puja. Swamiji's face expressed a divine feeling. On the *Dasami* day the Mother's image was consigned to the waters of Ganges; and the day after the Holy Mother blessing Swamiji and other Sannyasins returned to her Calcutta residence.

After the Durga Puja, Swamiji also celebrated the Lakshmi and Syama Pujas that year in the Math, according to Shastric injunctions. In those Pujas S. Iswarchandra Bhattacharjee was *Tantra-dharaka* and Brahmachari Krishnalal was the *Pujaka*.

* * * *

Thus towards the end of his life Swamiji showed much reverence to the forms of the Hindu institutional worship. To those who indicate the Swami as only a Vedantist and Brahma-juani, this observance of Pujas by Swamiji is a thing to be carefully considered. "I have come to fulfil, not to destroy."—Swamiji has fulfilled the truth of this saying in many ways in his life. Just as Sri Sankaracharya, the lion of Vedanta, in spite of his reverberating the sky of Indian spirituality with the thunder-roll of Vedantic truths, did not fail to show reverence to the Gods and Goddesses of Hinduism—but, animated by reverence, has composed many invocations and hymns of praise in honour of them, similarly

Swamiji in the interests of truth and duty showed great reverence to the practices of Hinduism. In personal charm, in eloquence, learning, interpretation of the scriptures, in advancing the weal of people, in *Sadhana*, and in self-control, such a well-informed and many-sided personality like Swamiji is unique in the present century. The future generation of Indians will gradually understand this. By associating with him we have become blessed and charmed and therefore invite all in India irrespective of caste or race to the study of the life of this great person, a second Sankara, and mould their lives in his ideal. In Juana a Sankara, a Buddha in greatness of heart, a Narada in Bhakti, a Sukadeva in Brahmajñana, a Brihaspati in discussion, an Arjuna in courage, a Vyasa in scriptural knowledge,—the time has come to appreciate the fulness of Swamiji's life. That the life of Swamiji, of many-sided genius, is fit to be accepted as an ideal in the present Yuga, is beyond doubt. The world is lighted by the rays of the Brahma-vidya of this great Acharya, the meeting-place of all religions. O Brother! See the tinge of the dawning sun in the eastern sky and feel the pulsation of a new awakening!

From the Sanskrit.

"Look to this day,
For it is life, the very life of life,
In its brief course lie all the
Varieties and realities of your existence;
The bliss of growth,
The glory of action,
The splendour of beauty;
For yesterday is but a dream,
And tomorrow is only a vision,
But to-day well lived makes
Every yesterday a dream of happiness,
And every tomorrow a vision of hope.
Look well therefore to this day!
Such is the salvation of the dream."

OCCASIONAL NOTES.

THE Gita draws the rule of heroic action from the Vedantic doctrine of the Brahman, and in the bringing out of the inherent implications, the grandest ideals of work have been brought out, which give infinite accession of power and possibilities to human capacities and destiny. How can the Brahman which is immutable, actionless and impersonal, furnish any basis for action? It is just for these qualities of Brahman, that the grandest ideal of work for work's sake, duty for duty's sake, can be deduced. It is this feature of the Vedantic doctrine of Brahman—that even in actions It is actionless, even in the web of personal relations It is impersonal and in the midst of change It is calm, peaceful and at rest,—that renders possible the grandest ideal of Karma-yoga, established in ineffable calm and raised above egoistic passion. This constitutes the strongest element in the ideal of Karma-yoga, on which all its mental attitudes and practices have been based.

Intellectually it constitutes a paradox and an enigma to the reason. That Brahman acting and rendering possible all actions is actionless, that being the doer of all actions It is still an *akarta* (non-doer), that in the midst of the modifications of Prakriti, It remains immutable and stable, is a hard nut for the intellectual reason to crack. The solution also can not be reached, so long as the changes of Nature, and the personality of the Jiva are not transcended and the level of the immutable and impersonal Self is reached. Vedanta does not seek to offer

an intellectual explanation of this, but merely posits it as a statement of facts. It merely adduces some instances from well-known facts of Nature to illustrate this *alepa-vada*, the doctrine of non-contaminating conjunction. Among the instances are the water on the lotus-leaf, which bears it on its surface, but is not wetted by it, and the magnet which renders possible the movements of the iron filings, yet does not move of itself. This is not offered as any explanation of the fact, but only as a pictorial thinking and representation of a fact which is realised and felt in life, on a plane of consciousness higher than the seekings of reasoning and intellectual ratiocination. Vedanta also points to a line of teachers who have realised this truth in life, and promulgated it in the world, such as Sri Krishna and Janaka. They have realised that it is possible to remain calm in the midst of the utmost activity, that it is possible to work intensely without any motivation behind, that it is possible to be attached, to give the soul, mind and body to work, and yet to be thoroughly detached and withdraw all interest from it.

If the intellect were the highest level of our being, the fundamental truth of our nature, and reason our only or highest means of Truth, then such a position would have been untenable and indefensible, as flying in the face of the law of contradiction. But the Self and the Spirit is the fundamental truth and intellect is only a transmissive instrument, and intellectual truths a derivation from fundamental truths which exist on their own authority,

expressed within the bounds of the mind and its own laws and its web of relations. The intellect must therefore follow as best it may and try to adjust its theories so as to include spiritual truths and prepare approaches to them. Otherwise intellectualism, instead of being a help to the opening out of the highest possibilities of human nature, becomes a snare and a confining prison.

To get to the non-attachment and impersonality which this doctrine of the Brahman implies is the gist of Karma-yoga. The result is not an impoverishment, but an immense heightening of human faculties and power of action. The Brahman is the infinite reservoir of strength, power, peace and blessedness, the wide ocean of Truth bereft of limiting fences which obscure or limit the human vision. The ego or personal self is the *chitjada-granthi*, the knot between the Infinite Intelligence of the Brahman, and limited matter. Thus by this knot, the All-knowing has become the little knower, the Almighty the little doer. If we can throw down the confining fences of egoism, the blocks and bars which it has raised, then this Infinite Power, Peace and Blessedness which is already behind, will take possession of life and make it a channel for the flow of energy and an instrument for Divine works. Another inspiring and hopeful feature of the truth of Brahman is that It is not to be created anew, not to be attained, but It is already attained and existent, and that the Power and Peace and Blessedness is the inalienable nature of man, and that we have only to remove the obstructions and in it will rush of its own momentum. Only on the theory of the Vedantic Brahman is it possible to explain the superhuman energy and mani-

festation of work and power which some human lives express, thus pointing to the greater possibility of the Divine taking possession of the human life and making it an instrument of its divine work.

This feature that the Brahman is *alepa* or non-contaminated by works, that even in the midst of intense action the Atman is perfectly at rest and at peace; that It works not, nor is the doer of work, gives the rule of calmness and detachment which is an imperative necessity for all great actions. Being identified with the inactivity and calmness of Brahman which is our greatest and innermost Self, in the midst of intense activity, we give infinite extension to our capacity for work. This high balance and calmness of the Self raised above the turmoil of work, when realised in knowledge and practice, gives a great extension to our sustaining energy and producing an infinite amount of work without feeling fatigue or exhaustion of the mind or body. Sustained and upborne by the calmness, strength and power of the Self in its own poise, which with the ego as a passive instrument flows through our life, the material instruments of mind and body are saved the needless fitter and waste involved in work from attachment and they even get the power of self-recuperation and it is long before any fatigue is felt. This explains the inexhaustible energy and capacity for work of the knower of Brahman and the great reserve of power and strength in the lives of balanced, calm and collected personalities.

The knot of the heart, the *hridaya-granthi*, is the ego, the limited self with personal desires, interests and attachment, and it is this knot which is sought to

be dissolved by the two mental attitudes which are adopted in Karma-yoga, viz. the renunciation of the fruits of action, and the giving up of all attachment for the work. For it is the latter which diminish the intensity of the Power which is behind the mind and ego, make it run in little eddies, make it fallible, weak, and inefficient. They confine the soul in the prison of egoism, thus shutting off the flow of the Infinite Power behind. By moving away from the ego-centre of motivation and activities which is implied in the giving up of attachment for work and the desire for its results, the doubt again and again occurs in the mind that all springs of action will be killed or else power diminished. It may seem so to our present ego-bound consciousness, on account of our knowing only of work undertaken under the high pressure of selfish desires, passion or some wild expectation. But truly unselfish work undertaken and prosecuted with detachment and calmness, with no hankering for immediate results, but simply for its own sake, is a very potent influence, and despite temporary frustration in the course of its working out is sure to triumph in the long run. The ego-centre is an obstructive medium, and when this is not laboured and fostered, but dissolved and made only a channel and a passive instrument for the super-ego, it is then that the work partakes of largeness in character, is puissant in will and goes straight to the mark. There may not be violence or fury in the outward manifestation, but in its very calmness will lie its strength.

The Gita therefore enjoins on the Karma-yogi to adopt the worshipful attitude with regard to works, in order to get rid of the ego-consciousness and the

limitation and diminution of power which it brings. The worshipful attitude is the most unselfish, in which no personal motive of gain or loss, no selfish interest lurks. The whole soul is given to the work for the joy of creation, for the worship of the Divine power which manifests in all works, and there being no oblique pull or deflection of the energy towards self-regarding motives, there is a concentrated pouring of the whole being in the work at hand. Work is then performed through Yoga with the Lord of work, immersed in Samadhi, in which the consciousness of the lower-ego is absent. Thus when work is performed without any ulterior motives, losing all consciousness of the lower-ego, and its selfish insistences and motives, simply for the joy and delight of work for its own sake, worshipping the Divine, being one with the Divine which is in work, then it is done from a higher plane than the lower level of ego-consciousness. It is more potent in character, infinitely better in results, and productive of the greatest good to the world. Just as the artist, absorbed in the beauty and power of the Divine idea, loses consciousness of himself and produces masterpieces, similarly work done without any idea of personal benefit or the getting of immediate results, simply as a worship of the Highest, becomes perfect, infallible, and ultimately produces infinite good. Thus working without motives does not mean aimless work, with a dissipated and diffused will and energy. It does not mean that one should not apply his intelligence and adapt means to ends, but that in the performance of the work itself, there should not be any ego-centric motives beyond the performance of the work as the highest worship, thus preventing the frittering away of a great

portion of energy, to bring the work to its highest pitch of perfection and concentrated power.

GREAT IS THE ATMAN'S SOARING FREEDOM.

THERE is the timeless, spaceless, causeless Atman,—nameless, thoughtless, formless. It is the Ever Free. The fetters of life cannot bind It, nor can the evils of life disturb Its peace. Ageless, spotless, unembodied, it cannot live, nor yet can die—for It is eternally free from the quests and the things that go to make and build up the fabric of life and death.

Secondless is the Ever Free, but one and omni-existent. The many are bound in name and form, bound in the manifold, changing and bound in the dying life of things, while It, unbound, being beyond being, birthless, deathless, is not of the world, or the world of It.

The ocean of life surges onward and never-ending is its moan and storm; never-ending is the ebb and the flow of life, and shoreless is its wide expanse. Restless, terrible and of woe begotten is the myriad-waved ocean of life; but peace and life and light and strength are his who is free, whose ears are deafened to the sob and the roar and the sigh and the storm of life. Such is the Atman's soaring freedom.

Great is the anguish of the earnest soul for it longs for a life beyond the passing, shadowy, childish things that hinder its vision of the Atman free. Though the call be loud, and bold, still must the soul call louder, bolder, defying life, battling the fear of death, for the soul is rooted in

the Eternally-Beyond, in the nature of the Atman free.

Though the chains of life be adamant-like and though they be of gold; they must break when the soul has sensed and seen the Atman great, boundless, pure and free. The Atman is; the Atman is alone.

—F. A.

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA AND SRI RAMAKRISHNA.

(Continued from page 43.)

WE remember that once Narendra told us about himself thus: "Ever since entering on youth, every night at the time of sleep two imaginations used to take shape and appear before my mental eye in vivid colours. In one I used to see as if I became the owner of great wealth and prosperity, and occupied a high position among those who have attained great fame and fortune and are esteemed great in the world—and I felt that the power to attain it was actually present within me. In the next moment I saw that renouncing everything of the earth; depending only on the will of Ishvara; wearing the *Kaupin*, and living on chance food, spending the night at the foot of a tree, I was passing my days, and I used to think that if I chose, I was also able to live such a life like the ancient Rishis and Munis. Of these two pictures rising in imagination for the regulation of my future life, in the end the latter would ultimately occupy my whole being; and I would think that only thus could a man attain to the supreme Bliss, and I should also do likewise. Thinking thus of the bliss of such a life, immersed in the thought of God, I used to fall asleep. And

strange to say, every night for many days it happened so."

Narendranath realised from th's early age, Dhyana (meditation), as the best way for the attainment of God; and this seems to be the effect of his previous *samskaras*. When only four or five years of age, buying the earthen dolls and images of Sita Ram, Mahadev and other Gods and Goddesses from the bazar and bedecking them with garlands and flowers, he would sit in front of them closing his eyes and simulating meditation and would now and again look around to see if matted hair descended from his head and entered the earth like roots of trees,—for he had heard from the old ladies of his home that long and matted hair descended from the head of the ancient Rishis and Munis in the course of long meditation and took root in the soil. His revered mother used to say that one day Narendranath, in company of a neighbour boy, Hari, entered without the knowledge of anyone a sequestered part of the house and stayed there such a long time simulating meditation that members of the family went in different directions in search of him and thought that losing his way he was wandering about in the streets of Calcutta. Afterwards finding that portion of the house closed, one broke it open and entering found—the boy was still sitting unmoved there. Although it was a boyish imagination, still from it we can understand with what wonderful tendencies he was born into the world. However at the time we are writing about, no one among his relations knew that he practised meditation everyday. For at night when everybody had taken to sleep, shutting the door of his room, he would sit for meditation and sometimes would get so much absorbed in it that he

would come back to external consciousness after the whole night had passed.

A little while before this period one event encouraged Narendranath in his tendency for meditation. With his friends he one day went to pay a visit to Maharshi Devendranath Tagore, the revered Acharya of the Adi Brahma Samaj. The Maharshi cordially received the boys and asked them to sit beside him and in the course of imparting much good advice requested them to practise meditation on the Lord everyday. Pointing to Narendranath he said, "The signs of a Yogi are manifest in you; if you practise meditation you will soon realise the fruits mentioned in Yoga." Narendranath was already very reverential to the Maharshi for his holy character and consequently there is no doubt that hearing such words from him he paid greater attention to the practice of meditation.

From his boyhood, many signs of the many-sided genius of Narendranath were observable. Before passing his fifth year he would recite the Sutras of the Sanskrit grammar—Mugdhabodha. An old relative of his used to take him on his lap every evening and taught him the names of the family genealogy, the hymns and *stotras* of Gods and Goddesses, and the aforesaid Sutras of grammar. At the age of six, he was able to remember the whole play of a Ramayana performance and would frequent the place in his neighbourhood where he would hear that the Ramayana was being performed. It is heard, that in a place near his home, a singer of Ramayana could not remember a certain part of his recital in the course of playing and Narendranath at once put him in mind of it and got much honour and appreciation from him. While present at the time of the Ramayana recital, he would look around to see if Mahaveer Hanuman, the servant-

devotee of Sri Ramachandra was present there according to his promise to hear the songs of Ramayana. With power of quick learning of things heard, in him was a wonderful manifestation of the power of retentive memory. He could master a thing by hearing about it once, and again, if a thing was thus mastered it would never go from his memory. Therefore from his boyhood his way of study was not like that of other boys. After he was admitted into the school in his boyhood, a teacher was employed to coach him in his daily studies. Narendranath used to say, "When the teacher came to our home, bringing my Bengali and English books I would point to him the place which was fixed as the lesson for the day, and then sit or recline at my ease. My coach would then go on, as if he was himself mastering those lessons, spelling, pronouncing and explaining those portions two or three times, and by that everything was mastered by me." When he grew up, he started mastering his text books, two or three months previous to his examination. At other times, he would read books outside the syllabus according to his inclination and spend his time. Thus at the time of his Entrance Examination he read through the greater portion of English and Bengali literature and many books on history. As a result of this habit he had to make great exertions and labour just before his examination. We remember, he told us one day in connexion with this topic: "Two or three days before the Entrance Examination, I found that Geometry was not at all mastered; then keeping up the whole night, I started reading and within twenty-four hours mastered the four books of Euclid and sat for the examination." It is needless to say that, because by the will of

God he was endowed with wonderful intelligence and a strong body, he could do such feats. Let nobody think that because Narendranath used to spend his time by reading books outside the syllabus, he would waste his time by reading frivolous novels or plays. A great desire used to come over him at certain periods to read certain kinds of books. Then he would read up all the books on the subject and master them. For example, in 1879, from the beginning of the year of Entrance Examination he had a great longing to read books on Indian History and read up the books of Elphinstone, Marshman and other historians;—again at the time of the F.A. Examination, he read as many English books on Logic as he could lay hands on, such as those of Whateley, Jevons, Mill—all of which he one by one mastered. At the time of the B. A. Examination he had a strong inclination to read the ancient and modern history of England and other European countries and to master the Western philosophy—similarly it should be understood with other subjects.

Thus after the period of his sitting for the Entrance Examination, as a result of extensive reading, the faculty of quick reading was markedly manifested in him. He said: "From now, sitting down to read a book, I had not to read each and every line of the book to understand the purport of the author's writing. Reading the first and last lines of each para I could understand the sense of the whole para. Gradually, as the faculty developed still further, I had not to read each para even, but by reading the first and last lines of a page I could understand the sense of the whole page; and again, where the author by means of arguments and reasoning tried to establish some point, and if the proofs and reasonings to establish that particu-

lar line of argument ran on to four or five pages, then by reading the beginning of the reasoning I could understand the sense of the several pages."

As an effect of extensive reading and deep thinking Narendranath at this time became of a very argumentative and polemical tendency. But he never entered into vain argumentation. Whatever he sincerely understood to be true and right, he tried to establish by argumentation, and if anybody in his presence expressed any view or opinion which ran counter to what he believed to be true, he would not listen to it in silence. But by rigorous logic and proofs he would try to rebut the opponent's view and to silence him. Few persons would not, before the rigour and force of his reasoning bow their heads; and again, needless to say, many defeated in argumentation with him would not regard him with a friendly eye. Hearing a few words of the opponent at the time of debate he could understand with what line of arguments he would support his case, and the answers to them would be already ready made up in Narendranath's mind. Questioned one day as to how the sharp reasonings to silence an opponent at the time of argumentation rose spontaneously in his mind, he said: "How many new or original thoughts are there in this world? If the few original thoughts that there are, and the arguments which have been advanced up to now for or against them, are mastered then the debator has not the necessity of thinking to answer an opponent's arguments. For, in whatever way he may support his view, it will fall within those arguments. Rarely a person is born in the world who gives new and original ideas or line of thinking to the world."


Born with a sharp intellect, wonderful memory and deep thinking, Narendranath could master a subject within a short period. Therefore, during his student days he had ample opportunity of roaming in freedom and spending his time in jollity with friends. Finding him spending his time like that people thought that he paid no attention to his studies. Many ordinary boys trying to imitate him and spending their time in amusements after his manner, injured the interests of their own studies. Like the acquirement of knowledge, Narendranath had a great liking for physical exercises. His father bought him a horse in his boyhood and he became a practised rider. Besides he more or less excelled in Gymnastics, *Kusti*, Indian clubs, *lathi*-playing, swimming and other exercises which enhance the power of the body, or the dexterity of its application. In the Hindu Mela established by Srijut Nabagopal Mitter athletes entered into competition for those exercises and were given prizes. We have heard that Narendranath also entered into the competition.

The traits of love for comrades and courage were observed in Narendranath since boyhood. These two traits of his character helped in placing Narendranath in his school days and afterwards in the position of a leader. When seven or eight years old, he went with his friends to see the menagerie of the late Nabab of Lucknow, Wazid Ali Shah, situated to the south of Calcutta at Matiabrooz. Raising subscription among themselves, the boys hired a country-boat at Chandpal Ghat for the journey and back. While returning one of the boys falling sick vomitted in the boat. The Mahommedan boatman, enraged at this, prevented them when, the boat reached Chandpal Ghat, from landing a-

shore, without their clearing the boat. The boys asked the boatman to have it cleansed by a sweeper and were prepared to pay for it, to which the boatman did not agree. Consequently hot words passed which gradually turning into a coming to blows, all the boatmen in the Ghat made a common cause and were prepared to give the boys a beating. The boys were non-plussed. Narendranath was the youngest of them, and in the confusion of the passing of hot words he descended from the boat and from the bank was thinking of some means to save his friends, when he found matters taking a serious turn. He then found two English soldiers were passing by the road and going out for a walk in the Maidan. Narendranath hastened and accosted them, and in a few words of broken English explained the matter and drew them to the place of occurrence. At such open and frank behaviour of this young boy the two good soldiers were pleased. Coming to the boat-side, they understood the matter and raising their batons asked the boatman to release the boys. Seeing the European soldiers, the boatmen were struck with fear and everyone slipped into his boat and the friends of Narendranath got off. The two good soldiers were very-pleased with the doings of Narendranath and invited him to the theatre with them. Narendranath did not agree to it, but with a grateful heart expressed his thanks and took leave of them.

(To be continued).

THE MEANING OF RELIGION.

 PERHAPS the most prominent fact of life, to a man of even ordinary understanding, is the infinite diversity of the world we live in. The physical universe with its mountains and rivers, its forests and deserts, vast plains and vaster oceans, cities and lakes, presents the most varied scene. The starry heavens, limitless and mysterious, inspire us with awe. And who can form an adequate idea of the wonderful variations which the nether kingdom, scattered over the length and breadth of this earth, holds up to our bewildered gaze? Of these the mind of man is the most difficult study, being the most complicated in character.

To the unthinking man the world must seem to be a hopeless puzzle, and he steers his little vessel of life in these troubled waters through mere instinct, just as his physical necessities prompt him to. And it must have been the same with humanity also, in its infancy, which with the lapse of centuries acquired some amount of experience, until at last it has developed into the present highly civilised type. It has now found that instead of being a chaotic mass, the world is a highly ordered system, in which everything has a place and a distinct function to perform. As a result of the constant search into the meaning of life, various philosophies have sprung up, satisfying more or less different sections of people over the globe. Of course there are tremendous differences among the conclusions of these philosophies, ranging from the ultra-materialistic to the extremely spiritualistic, but the highly complex nature of the human mind has found adherents for each among different nations and individuals, in ages past and present.

Whatever be the points of disagreement among different people, all seem to be united in certain common predispositions. And these may be briefly summed up as infinite existence, infinite knowledge and infinite happiness. All may not know of these with the same degree of clearness, but carefully analysed, it will be found that consciously or unconsciously the whole rational creation is moving in these directions. We want to live the longest life possible, have the most

insatiable thirst for knowledge and want never-ending happiness. About these we are wonderfully in agreement. Now, generally speaking, a man has two parts,—he has a body and he has a mind. This mind again has got a twofold aspect: One we call the intellectual and the other the moral or spiritual. We come to certain philosophical conclusions regarding the world—this is the work of the intellectual aspect of the mind, and we want to *act up to* them, to conduct ourselves in accordance with those principles arrived at,—this constitutes the moral or spiritual aspect. There is a clear distinction between these two aspects of the mind, for we often find people whose conduct gives the lie to their intellectual conclusions. Here we shall attempt to consider only the mental sphere, leaving the physical body aside.

With the progress of civilisation man has become a gregarious being. He must live in society. Experience has told him that that is the easiest way for him to realise his ends. As such he cannot look merely to his own personal needs, he has also to concern himself with those of his family, his community, his nation. This much is demanded of him, in his improved status. We shall try to see that herein is the origin of Religion. And the more religious a man is, the more he has to be altruistic.

That material help is a great factor in removing our physical wants needs no demonstration. We all see it in our everyday life, specially in these days of co-operation from one end of the globe to another. The same applies to the intellectual needs also. But it is not so self-evident that by seeking your good I further mine, much less the fact that this is the only way to do it.

But it is a fact nevertheless. Like physical and intellectual truths this paramount truth has also taken a long, long time to discover it, but it *has been* discovered, and to the Hindus belong specially the credit of not only exploring this region, but realising the very perfection in it—saying the last words that can be said on the subject. Other nations are also on the march, and in course of time will reach the same goal perhaps, but as it is, the Hindu religion claims to be the dictator in the field. With its note of Advaita, marvellously voiced forth and

conclusively realised in life, it stands in the pre-eminent position of a teacher unto humanity.

We have already noted that man has perforce to be mutually helpful to each other.—He has his duty to the family and to the state. An honest man cannot rest satisfied unless he has done his duty, and a dutiful man is considered a very moral man. But in duty there is an element of compulsion. I am bound to behave in a certain way towards you, since I have received such and such treatment from you. It is a mutual give-and-take. So, although a very edifying principle, Duty is not the highest motive of our life. And we discover it through the lapse of time. What is the meaning of duty? Put in plain words, it is a return for what we get. But of what avail is duty where we get nothing? Duty evidently is powerless there. The Paramahansa who is satisfied in his Self, craves nothing in the nature of external help. So what should determine his actions, his conduct towards his fellow-beings? There is this difficulty, yet we find these highest specimens of humanity sacrificing their all for the sake of man, nay, of beasts. Do we not find a Buddha offering himself as a sacrifice in place of a goat, a Sankara placing his head at the disposal of a dangerous Kâpālîka to satisfy his devilish object of attaining the joys of heaven, a Christ crucified for the sake of saving mankind, and a Ramakrishna declaring himself ready to undergo a million painful births to do the least bit of good to suffering man? There must be some higher principle of work, otherwise what moves these gigantic spiritual figures, these beacon-lights of the world, to fling away their glorious lives for the sake of others, while the most worthless man clings heart and soul to his puny life, perhaps not worth a penny? We have to explain this remarkable fact, and duty would not suffice.

The real explanation is in the constitution of man, which is, as the Vedanta says, Sat-Chit-Ananda, or Existence-Knowledge-Bliss Absolute. There we have to seek for the springs of action of the perfect man—in the majesty of the Atman. The uncultured man also is urged to action by the same agency, only in his case the direction is quite different from that of the sage. The thief steals and the robber murders under the same impulse, only it has become distorted through igno-

rance, through their mistaking unreal things as their Self. Man is Existence itself—so he seeks eternal life; he is Knowledge itself—so he craves for more and more knowledge; he is Bliss itself—so he wants the maximum of happiness. We see thus that in the commonest action of man is also to be met with a shadow, an inkling of the Reality behind, however he may mis-read it.

One thing should be remembered in this connection, viz. that the result must be commensurate to the action. We do everything for the body, or at best for the intellect, both of which are finite and perishable things, and we are sadly disappointed in the end, for no effort can make the perishable imperishable. The average man tries to preserve his little individuality eternally, and rejects the only way which might give him immortality, viz., by identifying himself, that is to say, knowing his identity, with the Atman—the Absolute. Instead of that he does just the opposite. He wants a permanent result by clinging to what is transient, but blows after blows, through repeated incarnations, turn him to the right direction, and he too is ultimately put on the way to eternal Freedom.

The perfect man does good to the world not because it is his duty, but because it is his *nature* to do so. He cannot help serving others. It is impossible for him to give up his nature, as it is for fire to give up its burning property. He cannot do so without ceasing to be. And what is the advantage in the case of one who acts thus from his nature? He escapes the sting, the painfulness, always attaching to duty. It is not compulsory to him—who, or what, shall compel him who has realised his identity with the Atman? What in the universe can hurt him, for is he not Existence itself? What can stop the avenues of knowledge to him who is knowledge itself? And what can curtail his bliss, for he is Bliss itself? He is, all-powerful, all-knowing and omnipresent,—or rather knows that even these are limitations upon him—the Spirit beyond dualities.

The perfect man is at one with the whole universe, for the Atman is One and indivisible. So the whole universe with its multitude of beings is a part and parcel of himself, nay, his very Self, and in serving others he is but ministering to his real Self. So he asks for no return. While work-

ing with the greatest intensity, he is above the reach of its results, good or bad, for he is poised high above them, from which ethereal height he looks upon all phenomenal activities, including those of his own, as mere shadows, reflections, of the Self—the Atman that he is. Such a man is the living embodiment of Religion, an object-lesson to mankind of what true spirituality is. He may not be a statesman, or a book-learned man, but one touch of him revolutionises a whole life. The sinner becomes a saint through his contact. His very presence solves our doubts. It is the lives of such men that teach us the true significance of Religion, that it is not mere profession, but actual life, that constitutes Religion. And if we study their actions, always we shall find that even the most trivial of these are actuated by purity, unselfishness, and love for all—the result of their realising their oneness with Existence. Well may they give out their life's best experience in the glowing words—*परोक्षकारः पुण्याय पापाय परपीडनम्*—“Doing good to others is virtue, and doing harm to creatures is sin.” And our duty lies in emulating them, so that we may justly claim to be the children of Aryan ancestors.

SWAMI MADHAVANANDA.

STORIES OF SAINTS.

(Retold by G.)

II.

HOLY EXAMPLE.

OF Saint Francis of Assisi it might well be said that he was a living imitation of Christ. For in all things did he consider the will of God. And when he felt such joy as had filled Jesus' holy life, he also wanted to feel the pain and suffering that was Jesus' lot as man. Francis walked in poverty and humility, without home or possessions, secure in the one great treasure that he valued, namely, the loving guidance of his Divine Master,

And as he went through Italy, from village to village, singing God's praise and preaching to the people, now and then a heart was touched unto repentance, so that before long Francis had a few companions who renounced the world, selling their possessions and distributing all they had among the poor, conforming in all things unto Christ's blessed teaching. The first of these companions was Bernard of Assisi.

Saint Francis, on account of utter contempt for the world and his simple life and love of poverty, was held in low esteem by his relatives and townsmen. They mocked him and called him foolish and a mad fellow and some poured on him foul abuse and drove him off with sticks and stones. For they could not understand how Francis, erstwhile rich and prosperous, could now live a beggar's life for the love of Christ. But Francis was not moved by all this abuse. He was patient and loving, returning good for evil.

Now, Bernard of Assisi, one of the richest and noblest of the town, watched Francis for a long time and was greatly astonished to see how the saint turned a deaf ear to all abuse and how with great sweetness he continued to preach the word of God among those who reviled and wronged him. And he thought within himself: "Surely this man enjoys the grace of God, for the world no longer touches him. Let me invite him to eat and lodge with me, that I may know for certain whether this Brother is a man of God."

And Francis came and supped with him. And Bernard made ready for him a bed in his own chamber that he might watch the saint's behaviour.

And when they retired for the night, Saint Francis, to hide his sanctity, threw himself on the bed and soon made as though he were sound asleep. And Bernard likewise made as though he were asleep and set up a loud snoring. At which, Francis thinking that Bernard was really asleep, rose from his bed

and began to pray. And with great devotion and deep feeling he cried unto the Lord: "My God, my God." Weeping and beating his breast Francis continued till morning, always calling: "My God, my God;" and naught else did he utter. Thus did the saint, conscious of his own insufficiency and weakness, implore God that by His pity He might supply what he lacked and give him the strength needed to walk in the path of righteousness.

Bernard seeing Francis thus occupied during the long hours of the night, felt greatly attracted towards the saint. And inspired by his holy example was moved to change his life. So the next morning he spoke to Francis: "Brother Francis, it is my sincere wish to renounce the world and henceforth to follow you and do whatever you bid me do."

Then Francis rejoiced greatly and said: "Bernard, this is a great and difficult task you have set yourself. Let us therefore beseech our Lord Jesus Christ to show us His will and how we may bring it to pass. Near by is a church; let us go to Mass there and let us pray to God that He may show us the path He wishes us to go by."

To this Bernard right gladly consented and together they went to hear Mass and give themselves to prayer. Then, after Mass and prayer, they went to the priest's house and asked that therefrom they might learn Christ's holy will. And the priest, at the bidding of Saint Francis, took the Holy Scripture and opening it thrice in the name of the Lord Jesus, read the words recorded there. And at the first opening he read: "If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell all that thou hast and give it to the poor and follow me." And at the second opening of the book the priest came to the text: "Take nothing for your journey, neither staves, nor scrip, nor bread, nor money." And at the third opening appeared Christ's words: "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me."

Then said Saint Francis to Bernard: "Brother, the Lord has spoken and shown us the way. Come then and let us do according to His will."

Hearing these words, Bernard went and sold all his treasures and property, for he was very rich. And with great joy he gave it all to the needy,—to the poor and widows and orphans and pilgrims and monasteries. And naught did he keep back for himself. Thus did he give himself naked in the arms of his Lord Jesus.

Brother Bernard henceforth lived a strict and austere life. In his eating and drinking he was most abstinent; he slept but little and long hours did he spend in meditation. Often he was wrapped in God, so that the world was altogether shut out from his mind and his body became rigid, nor did his eyes move. And when he came to himself again, he would cry out with joy in praise of his Lord.

For days and weeks Bernard would live on the top of a high mountain, contemplating the divine mystery of existence. And his mind being free and withdrawn from earthly things he soared up in divine meditation into the very presence of God.

Thus was Saint Bernard converted and brought to God through the holy example of Saint Francis.

VIVEKACHUDAMANI.

(Continued from page 89.)

मत्तुतन्मन्त्रमन्त्रानि विनाय हारहृताः ।

किमिच्छन् कस्य वा हेतुर्वैदुष्यानि तद्विदुः ॥

417. Realising the Atman, the Infinite Bliss, as his very Self, with what object, or for whom, should the knower of Truth cherish the body?

[*Harahrita*—har, to—reproduction of the body, or *hara*, to—destruction of the body. He never

thinks of himself as the *Bhokta*, the enjoyer, or *Jiva*.

Cherish—like men of the world.]

संनिवृत्त फलं त्येत्तन्मन्त्रमुक्तस्य योगिनः ।

संनिवृत्तः सदाशान्तिरस्योपायमिति ॥४१८॥

418. The Yogi who has attained perfection and is free-in-life gets this as result—he enjoys eternal Bliss in his mind, internally as well as externally.

कैराव्यस्य फलं योगो योगस्योपरतिः फलम् ।

सदान्दुःखानुभवाच्छान्तिरैवैवापरतः फलम् ॥४१९॥

419. The result of dispassion is Realisation, that of Realisation is withdrawal from sense-pleasures, which leads to the experience of the Bliss of Self, whence follows Peace.

यद्युत्तरोत्तराभावः पूर्वदुर्बलं निष्फलम् ।

निवृत्तिः परमा नृतिरातदोत्तुपमः स्वतः ॥४२०॥

420. If there is absence of the succeeding stages, the preceding ones are meaningless. (When the series is perfect) the cessation of the objective world, extreme satisfaction, and matchless bliss follow as a matter of course.

दृष्टदुःखेष्वुद्वेगो विद्यायाः प्रवृत्तं फलम् ।

यद्वृत्तं ध्यातव्येषां नाना कर्म जुगुप्सितम् ।

पश्चादयो विवेकेन तत्कथं कर्तुमर्हति ॥४२१॥

421. Being unruffled by earthly troubles is the result in question of Knowledge: How can a man who did various loathsome deeds during the state of delusion, commit the same afterwards, having discrimination?

[*Earthly*—lit. visible, i. e. those experienced in this life, as opposed to the *invisible* ones, i. e. those which are to be experienced hereafter:]

विद्यापानं स्वादसतो निवृत्तिः

प्रवृत्तिरज्ञानफलं तदीक्षितम् ।

तज्ज्ञानयोर्यन्मृगवृत्तिरज्ञादौ

नोचेद्विदां दृष्टफलं विमरसात् ॥४२२॥

422. The result of Knowledge should be the turning away from unreal things, and attachment to these is the result of ignorance. This is observed in the case of one who knows a mirage and things of that sort, and one who does not. Otherwise, what other tangible result do the knowers of Brahman obtain?

[*One who knows.....does not*—The man who knows the mirage laughs at the illusion and passes by, but the ignorant man runs after it, mistaking it for water. To the sage the world appears no doubt, but he knows it to be unreal and is not lured by it. Not so the man of the world.]

अज्ञानहृदयग्रन्थेर्विनाशो यद्येषतः ।

अनिच्छोर्विषयः किं नु प्रवृत्तेः कारणं स्वतः ॥४२३॥

423. If the heart's knot—ignorance—is totally destroyed, what natural cause can there be for inducing such a man to selfish action, for he is averse to sense-pleasures?

वासनानुदयो भोग्ये वैराग्यस्य तदावधिः ।

अहंभावोदयाभावो बोधस्य परमावधिः ।

स्निग्धस्तेरनुत्पत्तिर्मर्यादोपरतेस्तु सा ॥४२४॥

224. When sense-objects excite no more desire, then is the culmination of dispassion. The extreme perfection of knowledge is the absence of any impulsion of the egoistic idea. And the limit of self-withdrawal is reached when the mind-functions that have been merged no more appear.

[Compare *Punchadasi*, 'Chitrādīpa' Chapter, 285-6—"The acme of dispassion is setting at naught even the joys of the Brahmaloka, the highest heaven; Realisation is at its highest when one identifies oneself with the Supreme Atman as firmly as the ordinary man identifies himself with his body; and the perfection of self-withdrawal is reached when one forgets the dualistic universe as completely as in dreamless sleep."

ब्रह्माकारतया सदा स्थिततया निर्मुक्तया ह्यर्थभी-
रव्यावेदितभोग्यमोगकलनो निद्रालुवद्वाञ्छवत् ।

स्वप्नालोकितीकवज्रगदिवं पश्यन्कचित्तुभधी-
रास्ते कश्चिदनन्तपुनयफलभुग्धन्यः स मान्यो
भुवि ॥४२५॥

425. Freed from any sense of reality of external sense-objects; only seeming to enjoy such sense-objects as are offered by others like one sleepy, or like a child; beholding this world like one seen in dreams; and having cognition of it at chance moments;—rare indeed is such a man, the enjoyer of the fruits of endless merit, and he alone is blessed and esteemed on earth.

[*Only seeming.....others. &c.*—When his attendants or friends offer him food or some such thing he takes it but half-consciously, his mind being deeply absorbed in Brahman.

The enjoyer.....merit—i. e. a most fortunate man.]

स्थितप्रज्ञो यतिरयं यः सदानन्दमश्नुते ।

ब्रह्मण्येव विलीनात्मा निर्विकारो विनिष्क्रियः ॥४२६॥

426. That Sannyasin has got a steady illumination who, having his soul wholly merged in Brahman, enjoys eternal bliss, is changeless and free from activity.

[The characteristics of a man of realisation are set forth in this and the next few Slokas. Compare Gita II. 55-68.]

ब्रह्मात्मनोः शोभितयोरेकभावावगाहिनी ।

निर्विकल्पा च चिन्मात्रा वृत्तिः प्रज्ञेति कथ्यते ।

सुस्थिताऽसौ भवेद्यस्य स्थितप्रज्ञः स उच्यते ॥४२७॥

427. That kind of mental function which cognises only the identity of Brahman and Self, purified of all adjuncts,—which is free from duality, and concerns itself only with Pure Intelligence, is called illumination. He who has this perfectly steady is called the man of steady illumination.

[*Purified.....adjuncts*—eliminating the mental adjuncts and meditating on the substratum—Brahman, the Absolute. Sloka 241 and 197.]

यस्य चित्ता भवेत्प्रज्ञा यस्यानन्दो निरन्तरः ।

अप्रभो विश्रुतप्रायः स जीवन्मुक्त इष्यते ॥४२८॥

428. He whose illumination is steady, who has constant bliss, who has almost forgot the phenomenal universe, is accepted as a man liberated in this very life.

धीनर्धार्गपि जागर्ति जाग्रदूर्ध्ववर्जितः ।

बोधो निर्वासनो यस्य स जीवन्मुक्त इष्यते ॥ ४२९ ॥

429. He who, even having his mind merged in Brahman, is nevertheless quite alert, but free at the same time from the characteristics of the waking state,—and whose Realisation is free from desires, is accepted as a man liberated-in-life.

[*Is.....alert*—i. e. never deviates from the ideal life of a Jnani.

Characteristics.....waking state—that is, cognising the objective world through the senses, and being attached to it, like the ignorant man.]

शान्तसंसारकलनः कलावानपि निष्कलः ।

यस्य चित्तं विनिश्चितं स जीवन्मुक्त इष्यते ॥४३०॥

430. He whose cares about the phenomenal state have been appeased, who, though possessed of a body consisting of parts, is yet devoid of parts, and whose mind is free from anxiety, is accepted as a man liberated-in-life.

[*Cares.....state*—i. e. how his bondage will cease, and so on.

Devoid of parts—as Brahman.]

धर्तमानेऽपि देहेऽस्मिच्छायावदनुवर्तिनि ।

अहन्ताममताऽभावो जीवन्मुक्तस्य लक्षणम् ॥४३१॥

431. The absence of the ideas of 'I and mine' in this existing body which follows as a shadow, is a characteristic of one liberated-in-life.

['*I and mine*'—that 'I' am fair or 'I' am stout &c., or that this body is 'mine.'

Shadow—See Sloka 413.]

अतीतानुसन्धानं भविष्यदविचारणम् ।

बौदासीन्यमपि प्राप्तं जीवन्मुक्तस्य लक्षणम् ॥४३२॥

432. Not dwelling on the past, taking no thought for the future and looking with indifference upon the present, are characteristics of one liberated-in-life.

शुश्रूषोऽपि विविधैः स्मिन्स्वभावेन विलक्षणे ।

सर्वत्र समदर्शित्वं जीवन्मुक्तस्य लक्षणम् ॥४३३॥

433. Looking everywhere with an eye of equality in this world full of elements possessing merits and demerits, and distinct by nature from one another,—is a characteristic of one liberated-in-life.

[*Looking &c.*—The world is so full of diversity, yet the man of realisation looks behind, and sees the one Brahman in everything.

Nature—preponderance of one or other of the three Gunas.]

इष्टानिष्टार्थसम्प्राप्तौ समदर्शितयाऽत्मनि ।

उभयत्राविकारित्वं जीवन्मुक्तस्य लक्षणम् ॥४३४॥

434. When things pleasant or painful present themselves, to remain unruffled in mind in both cases, through sameness of attitude, is a characteristic of one liberated-in-life.

अज्ञानन्दरसास्वादासक्तचित्ततया यतेः ।

अन्तर्बहिरविज्ञानं जीवन्मुक्तस्य लक्षणम् ॥४३५॥

435. The absence of all ideas of interior or exterior in the case of a Sannyasin, owing to his mind being engrossed in tasting the elixir of the Bliss of Brahman, is a characteristic of one liberated-in-life.

[*Interior &c.*—Since there is but One Existence—Brahman.]

देहेन्द्रियादौ कर्तव्ये ममाहंभाववर्जितः ।

बौदासीन्येन यस्तिष्ठेत्स जीवन्मुक्तलक्षणः ॥४३६॥

436. He who lives unconcerned, devoid of all ideas of 'I and mine' with regard to the body and the organs etc, as well as to his duties, is known as a man liberated-in-life.

[The Jnani is free from egoism or Abhimana, though he may be intensely active. This state is hinted at in this Sloka.]

विज्ञात आत्मनो यस्य ब्रह्मभावः श्रुतेर्यत्नात् ।

भवबन्धविनिर्मुक्तः स जीवन्मुक्तलक्षणः ॥४३७॥

437. He who has realised his Brahmanhood aided by the Scriptures, and is free from the bondage of transmigration, is known as a man liberated-in-life.

[Aided Etc.—By discriminating the Truth inculcated by the Scriptures.]

देहेन्द्रियेष्वहंभाव इदं भावस्तदस्य के ।

यस्य नो भवतः क्वापि स जीवन्मुक्त इष्यते ॥ ४३८

438. He who has under no circumstances the idea of 'I' with regard to the body and the organs etc., nor that of 'mine' in respect of things other than these, is accepted as one liberated-in-life.

(To be continued).

EPISTLES OF

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

(Translated from Bengali.)

CLXXIII.

अल्मोड़ा ।

कल्याणपुरे—

अवागमम् कुशलम् तत्रत्यानां वार्ताश्च साविशेषां तव पत्रिका-
याम् । ममापि विशेषोऽस्ति शरीरस्य, शेषो ज्ञातव्यो भिषक्-
प्रवरस्य श—स्य सकाशात् । —न्देन संस्कृतया एव रीत्या
त्वत्प्रबुधना शिक्षा, यदि पञ्चात्परिवर्तनमर्हेत्तदपि कारयेत् ।
सर्वेषां सम्मतिं गृहीत्वा तु करणीयमिति न विस्मर्तव्यम् ।

अहमधुना अल्मोड़ानगरस्य किञ्चिदुत्तरं कस्यचिद्विज्ज
उपवनोपदेशे निवसामि । सम्मुखे हिमशिखराणि हिमालयस्य
प्रतिफलितदिवाकरकरैः पिण्डीकृतजत इव भान्ति प्रीणयन्ति
च । अग्न्याहृतवायुसेवनेन, मितेन भोजनेन, समधिकव्यायाम-
सेवया च सुदृढं सुस्थञ्च सज्जातं मे शरीरम् । योगानन्दः खलु
समधिकमस्वस्थ इति शृणोमि, आमन्त्रयामि तमागन्तुमैव ।
विभेत्सौ पुनः पार्वत्याज्जलाद्वायोश्च । "उचित्वा कतिपयदिवसा-
न्यत्रोपवने यदि न तावद्विशेषो व्याधिर्गच्छेत् स्वं कलिकातामि-"
त्यहमथ तमलिखम् । यथाभिरुचिं करिष्यति ।

अ—नन्दः प्रतिदिनं सायद्धि अल्मोड़ानगर्यां गीतादिशास्त्र-
पाठं जनानाह्वय करोति । बहूनां नगरवासिनां स्कुन्धावासैत्या-
नां च समागमोऽस्ति तत्र प्रत्यहम् । सर्वानसौ प्रीणाति चेति
शृणोमि ।

यावानर्थे इत्यादि श्लोकाश्च यो बह्वर्थस्य वा किञ्चिन्नो नारो
मन्यते सगोपीनः ।

"सति जलप्राप्तये उपपाने नास्ति अर्थः प्रयोजनमि-"
त्यस्यार्थः ।

विश्वोऽद्यप्यप्यासः, किं सम्प्लुतोदके सति जीवानां तृष्णा
विलुप्ता भवति ?

यद्यप्यर्थेणाकृतिको नियमः, जलप्राप्तये भूतले सति जल-
पानं निरर्थकं, केनापि दातुमार्गेनायवान्येन केनापि गृहेनो-
पायेन जीवानां तृष्णानिवारणं स्वात्तदासापचुर्योऽर्थः सार्यको
भविष्यतीति ज्ञान्यया ।

शंकर एवावलम्बनीयः ।

इयमपि भविष्यतीति—

सर्वतः संप्लुतोदकेऽपि भूतले यावानुपपाने अर्थः तृष्णा-
तुराणां (अल्पमात्रं जलमलं भवेदित्यर्थः),—"आस्तां तावज्जल-
राशिः, मम प्रयोजनम् स्वल्पेऽपि जले सिध्यति"—एवं विज्ञानतो
ब्राह्मणस्य सर्वेषु वेदेषु अर्थः प्रयोजनम् । यथा सम्प्लुतोदके
पानमात्रप्रयोजनम् तथा सर्वेषु वेदेषु ज्ञानमात्रप्रयोजनम् ।

इयमपि व्याख्या अधिकतरं सन्निधिमापन्ना अन्यकाराभि-
प्राप्त्यर्थ—

उपप्राप्तयेऽपि भूतले, पानाय उपदेयं पानाय हितं जलमेव
अन्विष्यन्ति लोकाः नाम्नाम् । नानाविधानि जलानि सन्ति भिन्न-
गुणधर्माणि उपप्राप्तयेऽपि भूमेस्तारतम्यात् । एवं विज्ञानम्
ब्राह्मणोऽपि विविधज्ञानोपप्राप्तये वेदाख्ये शब्दसमुद्रे संसार-
तृष्णानिवारणार्थं तदेव गृहीत्वात् यत्नं भवति निःशेषसाधुः ।
ब्रह्मज्ञानं हि तत् ।

इति शं साखीवादं विवेकानन्दस्य ।

TRANSLATION.

Almora.

1st June, 1897.

Dear—,

Glad to know from your letter that all are doing well there, and to go through the news in detail. I too am in better health, the rest you will know from Dr. S—. Let the teaching go on for the present in the method revised by B—, and if any changes are needed in future, have them done. And it should never be lost sight of that this must be done with the consent of all.

I am now living in a garden belonging to a merchant, situated a little to the north of Almora. Before me are the snowpeaks of the Himalayas looking, in the reflection of the sun, like a mass of silver, a delight to the heart. By taking free air, regular diet, and plenty of exercise, I have grown strong and

healthy in body. But I hear that Yogananda is very ill. I am inviting him to come here. But then, he fears the mountain air and water. I wrote to him to-day, saying, "Stay in this garden for some days, and if you find your illness shows no improvement, you may go to Calcutta." He will do as he pleases.

At Almora, every evening A— gathers the people together and reads to them the Gita and other Shastras. Many residents of the town, as also soldiers from the cantonment come there daily. I learn also that he is appreciated by all.

The Bengali interpretation that you have done of the Sloka "वायनर्थः" &c.,* does not seem to me to be right.

The interpretation in question is this: "When (the land) is flooded with water, what is the use of drinking water?"

If the law of nature be such that when a land is flooded with water, drinking it is useless, that through certain air passages or through any other recondite ways people's thirst may be allayed, then only can this novel interpretation be relevant, otherwise not, it is Sankara whom you should follow.

Or, you may do it in this way:—

As, even when whole tracts are flooded with water, small pools are also of great use to the thirsty, (that is to say, just a little water suffices him, and he says, as it were, "Let the vast sheet of water be, even a little of water will satisfy my object.")—of identical use are the whole Vedas to a learned Brāhmaṇa. As even when the land is overflooded, one's concern lies in drinking the water and no more, so in all the Vedas Illumination alone is the concern.

Here is another interpretation which hits better the meaning the author wishes to convey:

• वायनर्थे उदयाने सर्वतः संस्तुतोदके ।

तस्मान् सर्वेषु वेदेषु ब्राह्मणस्य विज्ञानतः ॥

—Gita II. 46.

Even when the land is overflooded, it is only that water which is drinkable, and salutary, that people seek for, and no other kind. There are various kinds of water, which differ in quality and properties, even though the land be flooded over, according to the differences in property of their substratum, the soil. Likewise a skilful Brāhmaṇa, too, will for the quenching of the worldly thirst, choose from that sea of words known as the Vedas, which is flooded over with diverse courses of knowledge, that which alone will be of potency to lead to liberation. And it is the knowledge of the Brahman which will do this.

With blessings and good wishes,

Yours

Vivekananda.

SWAMI ADBHUTANANDA; IN MEMORIAM.

The story of the wonderful life of the Swami Adbhutananda is a matter of inner spiritual appreciation,—not one of outward incidents and details. As an offering of reverence to his holy memory we put down a few lines here. He was born of poor parents in the Chapra District of Behar. His previous name was "Latu." An orphan from an early age he came to Calcutta in search of employment and entered the service of S. Ramchandra Dutt as an ordinary servant-boy and performed the humble services belonging to it. Ram Babu then used to visit Sri Ramakrishna at Dakshineswar and sometimes would send fruits, sweets etc. to him through Latu as the bearer thereof. Thus he was blessed with meeting Sri Ramakrishna. The spiritual vision of Sri Ramakrishna did not fail to recognise the innate spirituality of this devotee even in the guise of a servant and he asked him to come again. S. Latu also felt an attraction for him. He would come whenever opportunity presented itself and carry offerings of fruits etc. to Sri Ramakrishna and sometimes would stay at Dakshineswar and be

engaged in his service. Thus it went on for some time when Sri Ramakrishna one day expressed the desire to Ram Babu to keep the boy Latu with him, to which both gladly and heartily agreed and since then he stayed with Sri Ramakrishna. He was the first among the Sannyasin disciples of Sri Ramakrishna to renounce the world and give his whole heart to the service of the Master.

Sj. Latu loved *Kirtan* (religious songs) very much. While he was a servant at the house of Ram Babu, whenever a party of religious singers passed by in the street, he would forget all work and join the party and be absorbed in the song for a long time. Thus absorbed in religious songs, he had to endure rebukes for neglect of duties. While at Dakshineswar where religious singing frequently happened, Sj. Latu with other boys would join it with great enthusiasm. Seeing their great love, Sri Ramakrishna prayed to the Divine Mother, "Mother, may they be blessed with spiritual ecstasy!" In a pure form a little practice produces results and so it happened and since then, Sj. Latu and others were blessed with the treasure of spiritual ecstasy.

Thus in the holy company of Sri Ramakrishna and by his devoted service Sj. Latu advanced in spiritual progress. Sri Ramakrishna also taught him about Dhyana, and other forms of high spiritual practice. Working the whole day Sj. Latu would fall asleep in the evening. Sri Ramakrishna once happening to see it told him, "What is this? Why will you sleep in the evening? Then when will you meditate and think on God?" Since then he gave up sleep at night and kept the habit to the last day of his life. Whether in the company of Sri Ramakrishna or after his passing away, all through his life he used to keep up the whole night and spend it in meditation and sleep only a little in the day time. The wonderful manifestation of spiritual power in him in later life was the result of this life-long Sadhana.

He served Sri Ramakrishna during the period of his illness and at Cossipore garden and received with others the Sannyasa and the *gerrua* cloth from him. He with Sj. Tarak and senior Gopal formed the nucleus of the Brotherhood at Baranagore, and there joined later by Sj. Narendra and other Sannyasin devotees, plunged in the

ocean of Sadhana, animated by a burning longing and quest of God.

He had no pretensions to learning or literacy, but would listen attentively to the Vedas, Vedānta and Puranas and could easily catch their sense and import. The reason of this easy grasp was that he realised in inner spirit what the scriptures indicate in words. Once a Sadhu was reading from the Katha Upanishad to him:

"The Purusha, the Spirit within, who is no longer than the finger of a man is seated for ever in the heart of creatures; one should separate him with patience from one's own body as one separates a blade of grass from its outer covering."

As soon as he heard the last words he exclaimed with joy, "That is well and truly said." As he had realised the state he could so easily understand the import of the sentence.

Hearing from others on all subjects he came to such conclusions about them that later when any English-educated Indian put him any question on a subject, he would give such a beautiful answer and solution of the question as would astonish the interlocutor. Even if this conclusion might not agree with others' there was no question of the high intelligence and thought behind his answers. The revered Swami Vivekananda once said about him, "Comparing the humble circumstances from which he has come and the progress he has made in the spiritual realm in a short time, with our circumstances in life and spiritual advancement, Sj. Latu is high above us. We are all born of cultured families and came with an intellect cultured by education to Sri Ramakrishna. Sj. Latu is thoroughly illiterate. We could fill up the time between our meditation and spiritual practices with study, but he had no such help. Only one thing was the stay and the main support of his life. That with meditation as his only help in spiritual life, he has been able without upsetting his mind to raise himself from humble state to high level of spirituality is evidence of his innate power and the wonderful grace of Sri Ramakrishna on him."

He had one special trait in his character—he would mix freely and whole-heartedly with all, without any sense of superiority. Boys, youths or old men, he received all and talked freely and joyously with all. He was very simple, spirited, and plain-spoken.

His last period of life he spent in Benares at the feet of Sri Viswanath. Even in old age, he would meditate the whole night and paid little attention to food or personal comforts—and live as always in the atmosphere of God. Nought but talk of God would be heard from him, and in speaking on the life of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda he would lose himself in admiration and the devotees would hear his talk with rapt wonderment.

—From the *Udbodhan*.

REPORTS.

The Nineteenth Annual Report of the Ramkrishna Mission Home of Service, Benares City, 1919.

The annual report of the Ramkrishna Mission Home of Service for the year 1919 under review, testifies to the invaluable services it has been rendering since its first establishment in the year 1900 with a very humble beginning, and also to the widespread sympathies it has enlisted of the generous public by its untiring devotedness to the humanitarian work of mitigating the distress of the suffering humanity. The message of Swami Vivekananda that the indigent, the diseased and the destitute, irrespective of caste, creed or sex, are veritable manifestations of God, has stirred the hearts of the selfless workers of the Home, who have devoted their lives to the service of humanity and to carry out in true spirit the noble words embodying the ideal of re-awakened Hinduism—“आत्मनः मोक्षार्थे जगद्धिताय च।” It is needless to emphasise the usefulness and the service of this institution and the great possibilities of the future towards the service of India's suffering millions, for such Homes are an invaluable asset to the society and as such to the body-politic of India, owing to its many-sided activities.

In the year under review, 16790 persons obtained relief, there being 6719 men, 4337 women and 5734 children. This relief work was carried on in a spirit of catholicity without any distinction of caste, colour or creed or any interference with religious scruples and feelings.

In connection with the Indoor relief (i) medical and surgical aid was administered to 1113 patients,

of whom 491 were women (mostly orthodox Hindu widows) for whom three wards were kept reserved, wherein no sweepers were allowed entrance, the workers themselves performing all the works instead. Allopathic, Homœopathic and Ayurvedic treatments were pressed into service to suit the varied nature of the diseases. The average daily number of such patients undergoing treatment was 72. The Home admitted 85 surgical cases, and the operations were mostly done under chloroform. Besides these 132 helpless persons (other than patients) were supplied with food and temporary shelter in the Home.

(ii) Moreover, 47 homeless poor women, aged invalids and widows received continuous help during the year. Of them, 25 widows and helpless women were housed and maintained at the Dasaswamedh Branch and 4 invalids in the Home of Service. The remaining 18 widows and helpless women of respectable families were maintained in another Branch at Luxa under the charge of a Lady Superintendent who has been paying due attention to training them in the art of reading, writing and sewing so as to enable them to earn their livelihood.

(iii) For the relief of the helpless and orphan boys, a Boys' Home was started two years back in which were admitted eleven such boys, for receiving education and for the formation of character under the able guidance of a wholetime graduate worker. Some of these boys are receiving free education in different schools of the locality through the generosity of the Headmasters.

(iv) The Home admitted 7 paralytic patients during the year.

(i) As regards the Outdoor relief it will be needless to expatiate on the fact that it comprises all the complex and the different natures of diseases. The total number of recipients of such medical help at the outdoor dispensary during the year amounted to 14530, the average daily attendance of patients being 94.

(ii) Besides these, monthly allowances and weekly doles of rice were given to the infirm, lame, blind, dumb and to the poor respectable ladies.

(iii) Reliefs of a miscellaneous character in the shape of money, food and clothing were given to 726 helpless persons.

Thus the above details of the nature and scope

of the humanitarian work which the Home has been carrying on since its inception, will bring home to everyone whose heart feels for the suffering millions, the indispensability and serviceableness of the Institution. The remarks of the distinguished visitors such as the Dist. Judge, the Commissioner and the Collector and others appended in the Report, bear eloquent testimony to the heavy responsibilities the Home has undertaken and the success with which it has discharged them. The Ramkrishna Home of Service, situated as it is in the heart of one of the most sacred places of India, holds up before the country a noble ideal of self-sacrifice and a spirit of religion which stands for nothing less than the service of humanity. With the passing of time, new responsibilities and a fresh volume of complex duties have developed for the Home which necessitates the immediate erection of two segregation wards, the quarters for the lady workers, and also the quarters for the resident medical officer, which are still under construction. It will easily be understood how the work will suffer if proper accommodation is not made for those on whom mainly depends the success of the work. The financial position of the Home of Service has not been in proportion to its manifold developments. The general expenses of the Home during the year amounted to Rs. 24,000, whereas the income amounted to about Rs. 9,000 only, leaving a heavy deficit which, as the matter now stands, would necessitate a curtailment of the works unless timely and ungrudging help comes in from the generous public. It will be a matter of profound regret if financial help be not forthcoming to further the growth of such a useful Institution and thereby ensure its steady progress in these days of construction and regeneration. We hope that this fervent appeal of the Ramkrishna Home of Service will not fail to strike a chord of sympathy in the hearts of our countrymen, and will meet with a ready response so that their immediate needs might be fulfilled as soon as possible and a permanent fund established as a provision for future contingencies.

Any contribution, however small, will be thankfully received and acknowledged by the Hony. Asst. Secretary, Ramkrishna Mission Home of Service, Luxa, Benares City.

We have received the following 5th annual report, from January to December 1918, of the *Ramkrishna Sevashrama, Tamluk, Midnapore*.

Indoor patients:—There were 9 cases, all of these except one were cured and duly discharged. Outdoor patients:—Altogether 1500 cases of whom 200 were new patients and 1300 were their repeated numbers.

Besides these, there were 56 cases of the sick people who received house to house relief from the workers of the Sevashrama.

Balance of the previous year :—	Rs.	69	4	10
Total receipts	...	...	1006	10 9
<hr/>				
Total	...	...	1075	15 7
Total expences	...	...	1019	17 7
<hr/>				

Balance in hand Rs. 56 0 0

This Sevashrama, started in the year 1914, with the avowed objects of imparting the Knowledge of Hinduism on the lines adopted by Sri Sri Ramakrishna Deva and of looking upon and worshipping all irrespective of caste or creed, as Narayanas by removing their needs and sufferings, has been doing inestimable service in this direction. Their indefatigable industry for the amelioration of the condition of the distressed has been universally acknowledged and applauded. But with the widening of the scope of its work the question of finance has become so pressing that the members of the Sevashrama are now fervently appealing for sufficient funds to the generous public for the successful working out of its humanitarian mission. We hope that all liberal-minded men should unstring their purses to contribute their quota of help to the Sevashrama and thereby encourage its noble undertakings.

The following is the third annual report of the *Ramakrishna Seva Samiti, Sylhet, 1919-20*.

It is gratifying to note that this Seva Samiti has made a startling progress in such a short period of time and has been rendering invaluable help to the distressed in times of famines and violent outbreaks of epidemic since its foundation. Night Schools have also been started under the auspices of this Samiti for the education of the depressed classes. The sympathetic letters from high Govt.

officials show the keen interest it has created in minds of the public by its indefatigable and unselfish work in moments of dire need of suffering humanity. We heartily wish its success and hope that this Seva Samiti should get greater encouragement from the public.

The abstract accounts of the Samiti for the year 1919-20 are as follows:—

Balance of the previous year—Rs.	155	15	0
Donations and contributions—	2635	13	11½
Total ...	2791	12	11½
Total expenses ...	2741	11	10½
Balance in hand ...	Rs. 50	1	1

MAYAVATI CHARITABLE DISPENSARY.

We beg to acknowledge with thanks the following contributions and donations in aid of the Mayavati Charitable dispensary from January to May, 1920:—

	Rs.	As.	P.
Mr. K. Bhaskaram, F. M. S. ...	2	0	0
From Vedanta Study Class, Redcliffs ...	29	13	0
Mr. A. Shama Rao, Deolali... ..	2	0	0
„ A. R. Kumaraguru, Bangalore ...	3	0	0
„ D. J. Kapadia	8	0	0
„ D. K. Nattu (Baroda)	8	0	0
„ K. Krishna Rao, Bezvada	3	0	0
„ Mathura Dutt Josi, Almora	5	0	0
Subedarni Mai, Pithoragarh	20	0	0
A Sympathiser	25	0	0
In memory of Swami Adbhutananda ...	5	0	0
Mr. Jadupati Chatterjee, Calcutta ...	10	0	0
	120	13	0

We have already informed our readers that the Dispensary building is in need of repairs, for which a pretty large sum is needed. We appeal to the generous public to come forward with their assistance. Any contribution will be thankfully received and acknowledged in the P. B.

Madhavananda.

Secretary, M. C. D.

Mayavati, Dt. Almora.

NEWS AND NOTES.

THE annual report of the Ramkrishna Mission Charitable Dispensary, Belur, Howrah shows an increased record of usefulness and service in the relief of the distressed and diseased people of the locality. In the year 1919, the total number of patients treated was 5,595, over against 1,000, treated in the first year of the establishment of the institution. It has secured the help of the Bally Municipality in the form of a grant of Rs. 120 for two years April 1917—March 1919. This philanthropic institution for the service of humanity seeks the help of the generous public and any contribution may be sent to the President, Ramkrishna Mission, Belur P. O., Howrah, Bengal.

WE have received a circular from the Edinburgh Indian Association which was founded with the object of affording accurate information regarding the courses of instruction given in the University of Edinburgh, as well as in other British and Continental Universities. The circular goes on to say: "Of late it has become a settled practice among the Indian students to flock to certain Universities for every conceivable subject, and though in doing so they are only prompted by the well-established practice of the past, yet it is becoming clear every day that the steady and increasing aggregation of students in these centres is leading to the derivation of less benefit and more harm than was the case hitherto. It is therefore eminently necessary that the student who desires to go to these over-crowded Universities should obtain fullest information regarding the educational facilities there, and in view of the great congestion therein consider the advisability of going to other centres, should these be in no way inferior to them; and the Edinburgh Indian Association is willing to afford all this advice. And it is hardly necessary to mention that the Indians resident here are best suited for this task, as they alone can well estimate the requirements of the Indian students and their expectations." All communications should be addressed to the Hon. Secretary, Edinburgh Indian Association, 11 George Square, Edinburgh.

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